

GENERAL ACCOUNT AND CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, September 2, 2003

At its meeting of Tuesday, September 2, 2003, at 9:31 a.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Hunsucker, and unanimously carried, the Board recessed into Closed Session, in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4) To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice Chairman Dan A. Hunsucker, and Commissioners Glenn E. Barger, Barbara G. Beatty, and Lynn M. Lail.

Also present were County Manager/Deputy Clerk J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Mick W. Berry, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, Staff Attorney Debra Bechtel, and County Clerk Thelda B. Rhoney.

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation President Scott Millar and Utilities and Engineering Director Barry B. Edwards were invited to attend the Closed Session.

Incentives for Sawmill Project at the Blackburn Landfill

Mr. Millar said a Sawmill Company is interested in locating on a site at the Blackburn Landfill. This would be a \$20 million investment over a three-year span, 115 plus jobs, paying \$767 per week which is higher than the current \$550 per week average. The Sawmill Company has facilities in Union Grove, NC and Blacksburg, SC. They use lasers and band saws rather than circular saws. The outside noise would be similar to a diesel engine, and there are currently three diesel generators running at the landfill so any noise generated should not have any more impact.

The Sawmill Company needs approximately 75 acres. Mr. Edwards said 71 acres was purchased for soil for the construction and operation of the County's Blackburn landfills. The company would pay to move the soil where the actual plant would be located onto County property and the county would retain the right to remove the remaining soil as part of any agreement.

The Sawmill Company is requesting an incentive of 71 acres located in the northeast section of the landfill. Staff estimates the property value at \$5,800 per acre for a total incentive of \$411,800. This would also put the property back on the tax roles. The County needs the dirt but not the land and the County's intention was to eventually turn the 71-acre tract into industrial property after the dirt was removed. The Company would pay for a roadway and waterlines into the property.

There would be an additional 75 trucks in and out of the area hauling logs and sawdust. This would be a four-day per week operation and the kilns would operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Mr. Millar said the Company had discussed purchasing heat from the County's generators for the kilns.

The Company is searching for a location in a 500-mile radius from Virginia to North Georgia. The Company currently produces 750,000 board feet per week in its two plants and the new plan would produce 1.5 million board feet per week. The Company is headquartered in Cleveland County and has site selections down to three sites.

Mr. Millar said there were funds available from the "NC Moving Ahead Money," for economic properties. NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will help with paving but he was not sure about the road widening.

Mr. Millar said there were a lot of sawmill workers in Catawba County without jobs.

Mr. Millar said he expected a letter from the Company in approximately two weeks with a decision about where the company wants to locate its new sawmill.

The Board felt this would be a high tech company, generating a lot of money and recommended that Mr. Millar find out if NCDOT would assist with the road widening.

Mr. Edwards left the closed session.

At 10:05 a.m., the Board returned to regular session.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair

Thelda B. Rhoney, County Clerk